

Faith Under Fire

The Life of Joseph

A Midweek Bible Study Series

Part Four – Joseph Is Still Alive

Genesis 37:31-35 (NLT) ³¹ Then Joseph's brothers killed a goat and dipped the robe in its blood. ³² They took the beautiful robe to their father and asked him to identify it. "We found this in the field," they told him. "It's Joseph's robe, isn't it?" ³³ Their father recognized it at once. "Yes," he said, "it is my son's robe. A wild animal has attacked and eaten him. Surely Joseph has been torn in pieces!" ³⁴ Then Jacob tore his clothes and put on sackcloth. He mourned deeply for his son for many days. ³⁵ His family all tried to comfort him, but it was no use. "I will die in mourning for my son," he would say, and then begin to weep.

- **It will be twenty long years before Jacob will see Joseph again.** But, worse than that, he will spend those years agonizing over the death of a son who is not really dead! That is the ultimate torment of mind – a needless agony, a pointless sorrow, a senseless despair. **JACOB'S DREAM WAS NOT DEAD, IT WAS ONLY DELAYED.**

Proverbs 13:12 (NLT) *Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but when dreams come true, there is life and joy.*

DISAPPOINT: - to "fail to come up to the expectation or hope of"
- to "frustrate"
- to "NOT APPOINT" (appoint – to "arrange or provide")

- Jacob was disappointed because his expectations and hopes were dashed, his plans for his favored son were frustrated, and God did not arrange the events of his life or provide him with the fulfillment of his dreams in the way that Jacob thought best. But God was still at work, and one day he would hear the words, "Joseph is still alive!"
- **EVEN WHEN WE ARE DISAPPOINTED, GOD IS STILL AT WORK BEHIND THE SCENES. YOUR DREAM IS NOT DEAD, IT IS ONLY DELAYED!**

THE DREAM IS STILL ALIVE, EVEN WHEN ...

1. Someone has tried to KILL or SILENCE the dream

- Joseph was Jacob's favorite son, his dream. Joseph's brothers threw that dream in a pit and sold it into slavery, in an attempt to snuff it out. Potiphar's wife hated the dream, falsely accused it and sent it to an Egyptian jail. But the dream wouldn't die!
- A dream from God cannot be killed or silenced by external forces! Only you can choose to let the dream die, by killing it from within!
- **Jeremiah 20:9** *Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.*
- **1 John 4:4** *Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.*

2. You've done something to HURT or DELAY the dream

- Every one of us has done something from time to time that let God, others or ourselves down. Sometimes, we have hindered the will of God in our lives by our own actions. But God doesn't hold that against us; He waits for us to step back into His plan.
- God's purposes may be delayed, but they will not be denied.
- **2 Timothy 2:13 (NLT)** *If we are unfaithful, he remains faithful, for he cannot deny himself.*
- **YOUR FAILURE IS NOT FATAL – UNLESS YOU LET IT BE!**
- Old saying in Texas: "It doesn't matter how much milk you spill as long as you don't lose your cow."

3. You're in a time of PERSONAL FAMINE

- The famine in Canaan was one of the hardest things Jacob's family had to go through – people were dying all around them. But what Jacob didn't realize was that God had allowed the famine in order to make him look toward Egypt (and Joseph!) for help.
- **Psalms 37:23 (NLT)** *The steps of the godly are directed by the Lord. He delights in every detail of their lives.*
- **Romans 8:28 (NLT)** *And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.*

- The dream has been alive for twenty years, but Jacob has not known it. Finally, he has a chance to rediscover his dream ...

Genesis 45:25-28 (NLT) ²⁵ And they left Egypt and returned to their father, Jacob, in the land of Canaan. ²⁶ **“Joseph is still alive!”** they told him. “And he is ruler over all the land of Egypt!” Jacob was stunned at the news—he couldn’t believe it. ²⁷ But when they had given him Joseph’s messages, and when he saw the wagons loaded with the food sent by Joseph, his spirit revived. ²⁸ Then Jacob said, “It must be true! My son Joseph is alive! I will go and see him before I die.”

HOW TO REDISCOVER YOUR DREAM ...

1. Realize that your dream is still CALLING to YOU

- Jacob had long since stopped inquiring about Joseph, but Joseph was still inquiring about him!
- Go back and pick up your dreams – they will be right where you left them! But you must make the journey!
- Song by Shawn Craig: Beyond the open door is a new and fresh anointing, Hear the Spirit calling you to go, Walk on through the door, for the Lord will go before you, Into a greater power you’ve never known before.
- **Revelation 3:8 (NLT)** *I know all the things you do, and I have opened a door for you that no one can shut. You have little strength, yet you obeyed my word and did not deny me.*

2. Turn your attitude from MOURNING to FAITH

- Jacob had to believe the report about Joseph – AND STOP MOURNING! He had to change a 20-year-old attitude if he wanted to rediscover his dream!
- Bucket #1: “There has never been a life as disappointing as mine. I never come away from the well full but what I return again empty.” Bucket #2: “There has never been such a happy life as mine. I never come to the well empty but what I go away again full.”
- Illustration: A grandpa was sleeping and his grandkids smeared limburger cheese under his nose. When he woke up he went from room to room saying, “This rooms stinks!” Finally, he went outside and said, “Why, the whole world stinks!”

- Illustration: According to the theory of aerodynamics, as demonstrated through wind tunnel tests, the bumblebee should be unable to fly. Because of the size, weight and shape of his body in relationship to his total wing spread, flying is scientifically impossible. But the bumblebee, being ignorant of the negative conclusion of scientific theory, goes ahead and flies every day!

• ATTITUDE

It is the “advance man” of our true selves.
Its roots are inward but its fruit is outward.
It is our best friend or our worst enemy.
It is more honest and more consistent than our words.
It is an outward look based on past experiences.
It is a thing that draws people to us or repels them.
It is never content until it is expressed.
It is the librarian of our past, the speaker of our present, and the prophet of our future.

- NIKE LOGO: Just do it!
- Article from Medical Journal: We hear it almost every day: sigh, sigh, sigh. I just can’t get myself motivated to ... (lose weight, etc.). We have news for you. Motivation is not going to strike you like lightning. And motivation is not something that someone else can bestow or force on you. The whole idea of motivation is a trap. Forget motivation. JUST DO IT. Exercise, lose weight, or whatever. Do it without motivation and then guess what? After you start doing the thing, that’s when the motivation comes and makes it easy for you to keep on doing it. Motivation is like love and happiness. It’s a by-product. When you’re actively engaged in doing something, it sneaks up and zaps you when you least expect it. As Harvard psychologist Jerome Bruner says, “You’re more likely to act yourself into feeling than feel yourself into acting.” So act! Whatever it is you know you should do, DO IT!

3. Let your SPIRIT REVIVE within you

- When Jacob heard the MESSAGES from Joseph, his spirit revived and he made a decision to go to Egypt! You can hear God’s MESSAGE and make a decision to rediscover the dream God has placed in your heart!
- **Psalms 73:2-3, 16-17** ²*But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped.* ³*For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.* ¹⁶*When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me;* ¹⁷*Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end.*

THE WEAVER

My life is but a weaving
Between my Lord and me;
I cannot choose the colours,
He worketh steadily.

Oft-times He weaveth sorrow,
And I, in foolish pride
Forget He sees the upper,
And me the under side.

Not till the loom is silent
And the shuttles cease to fly,
Shall God unroll the canvas
And explain the reason why.

The dark threads are as needful,
In the Weaver's skillful hand,
As the threads of gold and silver
In the pattern He has planned.

He knows, He loves, He cares,
Nothing this truth can dim;
He gives the very best to those,
Who leave the choice with Him.